

TENE Romerois subgen. nov.

Type-species *Campsomeris tenebrica* Bradley.

Description: See above.

Campsomeris (Tenebromeris) tenebrica Bradley.

1957. *Campsomeris tenebrica* Bradley, ♀, *Entom. News*, 68: 97.

1957. *Campsomeris (Laevicampsomeris) tenebrica* Bradley, *Trans. Amer. Ent. Soc.* 83: 76.

Larval Rash of the American Dagger Moth *Acronycta americana* Harr. (Lepi- doptera: Phalaenidae)

DAVID L. WRAY¹

Both involuntary and voluntary larval urticaria were experienced by the writer in this case. On October 8, 1962, while on a field trip to Umstead State Park, I collected a caterpillar of the American dagger moth and lacking any other container placed it in a paper bag to take it back to the laboratory alive. I placed this bag on the car seat between myself and my colleague who was driving. During the course of the ten-mile trip back to town the caterpillar escaped from the bag and crawled up under my shirt and made contact with the skin area on the inside of my left lower and upper arm, and a large area on the left side of my body. Since the outside temperature was 85 degrees F and it was around 4 o'clock in the afternoon with a brilliant sun shining insects were still very active for this time of year. No pain of contact was noted during the trip of some 30 minutes back to town, but, just before arriving, a marked itching sensation developed on the inside area of my left arm and on the left side of my body above the waist. After 30 minutes the whole area of my arm and side began to break out in a severe rash. There were many areas of 10-15 mm in size which became swollen somewhat as if affected by a stinging

¹ Entomologist, Insect Survey, Division of Entomology, N. C. Dept. of Agriculture, Raleigh, N. C.

nettle rash. A considerable crop of smaller sized wheals or welts with elevated whitish centers showed. The surrounding skin areas turned pinkish in contrast to the normal skin color.

Within an hour an intense pruritus developed in all areas with which the caterpillar had come into contact. In the centers of these areas the skin began to form small blisters about 2-3 mm in area. These of course were broken within a few hours by impulsive scratching.

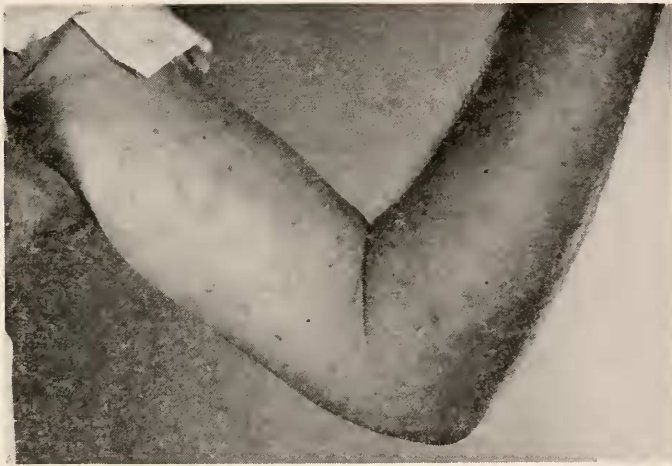


FIG. 1. Left arm showing condition of larval rash four days after exposure.

The intense pruritus continued for 4 days after exposure. The photograph² shows the upper and lower arm 4 days after exposure with many reddish spots caused by breaking the blisters and resultant bleeding from scratching. The wheals and erythematous areas are much reduced. A kodachrome of my left side showed even a larger crop of wheals and welts and, of course, ran through the same period of healing as the arm. The first night I bathed all affected areas with household ammonia.

² Photo, courtesy Joel Arrington, N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

which helped reduce the pruritus, and afterwards bathed the areas with alcohol. The pruritus bothered me more at night because I could not control scratching as well as during the day. The urticaria did not completely heal until about fifteen days after exposure.

The day after the involuntary exposure of my left arm and side to the urticating caterpillar I tested the caterpillar on the inside of my right forearm. Grasping it with forceps I brushed the caterpillar hairs, especially the 5 long black "daggers," all over this area of my skin from the elbow to the wrist joint. Within twenty minutes a rash began to develop as described above. Wheals 10-15 mm in diameter with surrounding erythematous patches developed just as described in the involuntary case. Also, there was no particular pain until a stinging sensation was noticed as the wheals began to form. The same intensity of pruritus developed during the next 4 days and the healing took about 15 days just as it did after my involuntary exposure.

Evidently the degree of toughness of the epidermis has much to do with the extent of the reaction to the poisonous substance from the caterpillar hairs. Both my colleague and myself have picked these caterpillars up in our bare fingers for study and photography many times previously without any apparent reaction, and he picked this one from my shoulders just before we got back to the laboratory. Also it seems evident that in this case, when the caterpillar crawled around between the body and outside clothing, it no doubt caused a more severe urtication due to the pressure of the clothing. Body perspiration also may have contributed to the severity of the urticaria that was experienced.